A ROTARY LIGHT SWITCH

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a rotary light switch with a housing and an actuating member mounted rotatably in the housing. Such rotary light switches are usual in motor vehicles.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Rotary light switches for motor vehicles usually have the switch positions "off", "parking light" and "traffic light", between which a switching over is carried out by rotating the actuating member, and additional switch positions for "fog light" or "front fog light" and "rear fog light", between which a switching over is carried out by axial movement of the actuating member. As the fog light is only permissible in combination with traffic light or at least parking light, measures are provided, by which particular combinations of rotary position/axial position of the actuating member are prevented.

From the DE 38 34 390 C1 a rotary light switch is known, the actuating member of which has two control pins which are urged radially outwards by spring force. The outer ends of these pins are rounded in a spherical shape and run in a guide channel arranged on the inner face on the housing. The guide channel is provided with profile tracks which on the one hand form various detent zones to define the switch positions, and on the other hand have axially rising zones which force upon the actuating member an axial movement component on rotation over particular peripheral areas of the profile tracks. The guide channel has a complex geometry and is therefore difficult to produce. Since the control pins are pressed radially outwards against the profile tracks, movement of the actuating member is opposed by considerable friction, so that relatively high actuating forces are necessary.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention provides a rotary light switch which is particularly simple to realize and permits reduced actuating forces. In the rotary light switch according to the invention, a cam surface is provided on the housing, which runs in peripheral direction rising axially and also facing axially away from the actuating member. On the actuating member, a radially projecting cam follower is provided, which on rotation of the actuating member runs up on the cam surface and only rests axially thereon. Ideally, the cam follower bears on the cam surface without any radial component. Consequently, when the cam follower runs up on the axially rising cam surface, only axial forces are produced which are required for the axial movement of the actuating member. The cam surface has a very simple geometry. It preferably consists of a section, for example rising linearly axially, and of a section adjoining thereto, which does not rise axially.

In the preferred embodiment, the cam surface is formed by a recess in a peripheral wall, which is formed on the inner face on a ring-shaped switch shield surrounding the actuating member.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS

Further features and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the following description of a preferred embodiment with reference to the enclosed drawings. In the drawings:

- Figure 1 shows a perspective view of the rotary light switch;

- Figure 2 shows a perspective view of a control piece of the rotary light switch; and

- Figure 3 shows a sectional view of the control piece shown in Figure 2.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The rotary light switch shown in Figure 1 has a generally circular-cylindrical housing 10 with a ring-shaped switch shield 12 on the end face, which coaxially surrounds an actuating member 14 in the form of a rotary knob which is rotatable about axis A (Fig. 3). The switch shield is provided with symbols 16 to indicate the rotary positions of the actuating member 14. The angle θ corresponds to the rotation angle between two adjacent switch positions. A further symbol 18 on the switch shield 12 is associated with an axial position of the rotary light switch. The switch shield 12 is fitted over the front end of the housing 10.

As can be seen from Figure 2, the actuating member 14 has an axial drive hub 20, with which a switch shaft of a switch mechanism (not shown) is coupled so as to be connected for joint rotation and axially fixed. In addition, the actuating member 14 has a cam follower 22 in the form of a pin, projecting radially outwards, which is formed at the outer end of a radial finger. A generally cylindrical peripheral wall 24, coaxial to the actuating member 14, is formed on the housing 10. In the peripheral wall 24, a recessed cam surface 26 is formed, which cam surface 26 consists of two sections 26a, 26b adjoining each other. The section 26a of the cam surface 26 has an axially rising surface, facing away from the actuating member 14; the section 26b of the cam surface 26 likewise has a surface facing away from the actuating member 14, which, however, does not rise axially. On rotation of the actuating member 14, the cam follower 22 runs up axially on the section 26b of the cam surface 26. By further rotation of the actuating member 14, an axial movement is forced upon it in the direction of the axial rise of the section 26a of the cam surface 26.

In Figure 3 the possible axial switch positions of the actuating member 14 are indicated. The cam follower 22 is located at the transition between the sections 26a, 26b of the cam surface 26 corresponding to an axial switch position adjusted by pulling on the actuating member 14. In this axial switch position, the fog light is activated. At the same time, owing to the rotary position of the actuating member 14, a vehicle light is activated, for example the parking light. In the same

axial switch position, the actuating member 14 can be rotated in a clockwise direction, in order to adjust the next rotary position, in which for example the traffic light is switched on. If, on the other hand, the actuating member 14 is turned from the rotary position shown in Figure 3 by rotation in an counter-clockwise direction into the "off" switch position, the curve follower 22 runs up on the axially rising section 26a of the cam surface 26, so that the actuating member 14 is forced to an axial switch position in which the fog light is switched off.

The cam surface 26 can be produced easily with any desired shape in accordance with design requirements. In the embodiment shown, the axially rising section 26a rises linearly; depending on the desired switching feel, the path can be progressive or degressive. As the cam follower 22 only bears in axial direction on a narrow cam surface 26, minimal friction occurs, so that the rotating light switch can be operated at a reduced actuating force.